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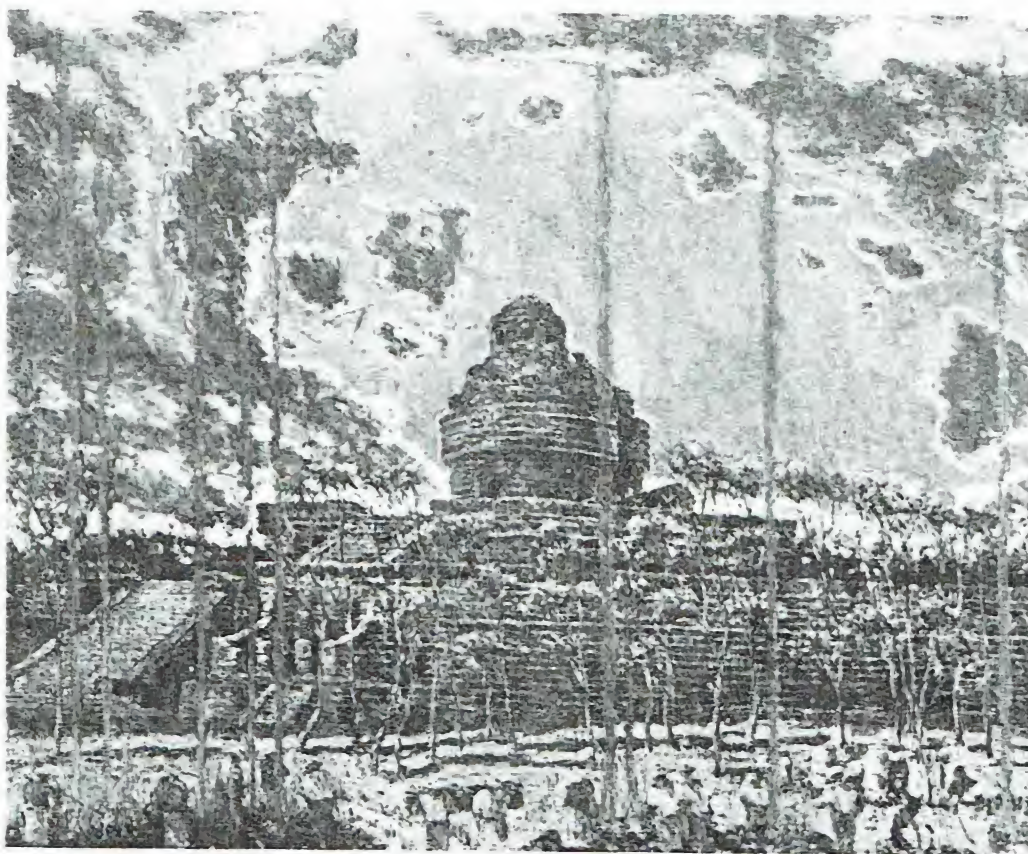
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THE "DO IT" LECTURES

MAYAN
REVELATION

136

QUALITY LIVING

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THE CREED OF THE TRUE SAINT IS TO MAKE
THE MOST OF LIFE AND MAKE THE BEST OF IT.



BELOVED CENTURION:

-- E. H. Chapin

We begin the third lecture lesson in the DO IT Series. As I told you in the preceding lesson, entitled "Reconsider", your instructors in the Mayan Order look upon this series as one of the most important you, as a member, have ever received and we hope you have benefited through the instructions and explanations given you thus far.

In this newest lecture lesson, called "Quality Living", you are given an explanation of some things which, I am sure, have been a stumbling block in your effort to live the GOOD LIFE. The studies you are about to take up in this manuscript which you now have in your hand will give you clarification, and I know that those of you who are earnestly seeking the heights in perfection will take a new lease on life as a result of the explanation of what PERFECTION really is. I am sure that you may feel that YOU COULD NEVER POSSIBLY ATTAIN PERFECTION, but this is a wrong conception, - It can be done. Now, right here, your Instructor would like to tell you a little story which I feel might be of interest to you, - also encouraging.

When I was very, very young (probably seeking to find my life work but not realizing at the time), I found myself very unhappy most of the time, because I was not satisfied with myself. In those days, I was striving so hard for perfection that I felt that even the slightest criticism on my part of anyone else, be it ever so small, was actually a sin. I felt that, in order to be what I so earnestly was striving to be, I must never even cherish a thought that perhaps someone else was not quite as good as he or she ought to be. As a matter of fact, I did not know then the things that I discovered later in my search for truth. I did not know then that in future years, I would be the leader of a great organization that was helping thousands to find the life abundant. I didn't know then that some day I would be teaching thousands of people how to find perfection in quality living; but, of course, what I was to be in the future was even then trying to manifest itself. That which I was making such an inspired effort to find was, of course, the ability to lead a perfect life.

Many of the answers to how to build a perfect life will be explained to you as you go forward with this lesson. One of the great things to learn is that life is made up, not so much of great sacrifices or great duties, but of smaller things; smiles and little kindnesses are so important as we go through our days, and I am happy that I am able to pass along what knowledge I have gained, to our wonderful people, - the members of the Mayan Order. I feel that if I could talk to every young man or woman, one of the things that I would say is - make the most and best of yourselves, because, in my opinion, there is no tragedy like a wasted life, a life failing to accomplish anything. It would be a wonderful life if everyone could so live as though they were living only for the benefit of other people. We live in deeds, not in years; in thought, not in breath; in feelings and not by time alone. We should count our time by the throbs of our heart. He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, and acts the best.

And now, with these thoughts uppermost in our minds, let us proceed in all earnestness and thoughtfulness along the path that leads to higher plains:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48.

1. ONE WAY OF SEEKING

We spend our lives seeking for quality. Whatever we have or get, we want the best, according to our understanding of the best. We even employ experts to help us judge the best things and obtain them. We pay a premium for quality, because we are told that in the market one gets about what he pays for.

But in this scramble to build the best homes, fill them with the best furnishings, own and read the best books, have the best teachers in the best schools, wear the best clothes, eat the best food, and drive the best cars to the best places, we need to be careful lest we overlook the most important thing of all - living the best lives, having the best characters, doing the best work, and making the best record with our consciences and with God, in other words keeping to the ideal not only of quality goods but also of quality living.

In this we have certain barriers to surmount. One is that we can see what we buy, but we do not see what we are and what we do as clearly as other people do it. Our eyes look outward, but only our minds look inward and too often nothing reminds us to use them as frankly and appraisingly as we use our eyes. It takes a little effort to set standards for ourselves and keep working to those standards, but that effort is extremely important and it pays extremely well.

An old and wise saying used to be, "Strive to be what you wish to seem to be." That is a good way to begin. It sets a goal and opens a road, which is that much. It is like a farmer going across the fields and letting down the fences till he has cleared a course out to the main highway.

Who are the people you most admire? Are they not people who are expert at something or other? Is it not true that the chief ones among them in your esteem are the ones who apply this plan to their lives, who live expertly and do their work in expert fashion? If that is the case, then what they are and do is your hope and ideal whether you realize the fact or not. What we most admire in others is what we most deeply desire to be and do.

Instances of quality living are not as numerous as we could wish them to be, but there are such instances and some of them are probably in your circle of acquaintance. Study them and find what is their secret. You will take on something of their nature by observing, and still more by adopting the plan of struggling toward what you wish to seem. To change good seeming into good fact is a program worth-while indeed.

The Master had a saying for all this. It is quoted at the beginning of this lesson - "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect."

That is the supreme formula for quality living. If it looks too exacting for you, don't worry about that just now. Just accept the plan tentatively, and hold fast to it till we have gone a little more deeply into our study of it.

2. ON BEING PERFECT

If you have not considered it carefully before, you are likely to view such a sweeping instruction with a great deal of dismay. "Perfection? That is an overwhelming assignment", we may say. "We have always heard it said that no one is perfect. The idea of being as perfect as God! Impossible!"

No, it is not impossible, nor even unreasonable. There have always been perfect people, and there are perfect people today. As perfect as God? Yes, of course. "It cannot be", you say. Countless people have that idea because they leap to the conclusion without knowing what perfection really is. Why not get a correct understanding of it right now? When you do you will see that it is something you can attain if you have the courage to try. Too costly? Of course not. On the contrary, IT WILL BE THE MOST REWARDING THING YOU EVER DID IN YOUR LIFE.

The trouble about this word perfect is that people are in the habit of assuming that it means something absolute, something that is as good as it is possible for anything to be. That may be the final goal, but it is not the beginning.

Perfection for any certain person or thing means being as good as it is possible for that person or thing to be now. One thing cannot be another, and so it cannot have the same perfection as another. Anything is capable of improvement and refinement, and so, perfection for it at one stage of its development is not the same as at some other stage.

Trying to be a drop of gasoline would ruin a snowflake, and vice versa. The one must have the purity of gasoline, the other the purity of frozen water; and these are two very different things. In the same way each one of us has to have the perfection that belongs to him in his own time, place, and situation. What might be perfection for one could be imperfection for another, because perfection is realized possibility, and possibilities vary and change. It is important that this be clear to you; otherwise discouragement might defeat you.

This should become clear when we consider the real meaning of the word "perfect", disregarding the popular notion and taking only the facts into consideration. The word comes from two Latin words meaning "make" and "through". It is a word for anything that is made through, and therefore genuine, anything that has no concealed faults and weaknesses, anything that is the full realization of what it was made to be.

A rose is perfect when it attains the completeness of its pattern. A LIFE IS PERFECT WHEN IT IS ALL IT IS CAPABLE OF BEING, THUS FAR. TOMORROW THE STANDARD MAY BE DIFFERENT, BUT NOT TODAY. In other words, a perfect life is a quality life, the life of one who does his best as of today. When we have done our best we have done what God does - His best - though our best and His best are two very different things. Think well, good student, on this truth, for it may well be the means of making it possible for you to attain perfection, whereas in the past you have

thought it beyond your capability.

This directive of Jesus is nothing impossible, or even forbidding. It is a happy way of life, and the consciousness of excellence is a happy thing to have. The Master has directed it. DO IT.

3. MOUSETRAPS AND LIVES

Emerson, our Great American practical metaphysician, has said that if one builds a better mousetrap, writes a better book, or preaches a better sermon than his neighbor, though he dwell in the midst of a wilderness, the world will make a beaten path to his door.

That is true in trade, as many business people have learned and all of them should. Those who prosper in business are the ones who turn out a better product or render a better service. It may be otherwise for awhile but not in the long run. Publicity may make the first sale, but quality must make the second. In order for a thing to survive through the years, it must be Good, and in this respect we point with pride to our Mayan Order; surviving and growing year after year, thereby testifying to its quality.

It is true also with regard to the work we do. We do not have to proclaim or defend its excellence. We have only to see that it has it, and it will not be long till it proclaims itself.

It is true also of the lives we live. We do not need to boast of them. We have only to live them. Boasting is a reproach to them, but quality is a champion. It is what people all around are really looking for. It is what they long to see above all else.

The average person has dreamed, and hoped, and wished he might do better. His daily prayer is that he may be a good man, but he cannot be that until he sees one. He has to have a pattern, a demonstration of how it is done. He longs to find one more than he longs for a better mousetrap, a better book, or a better sermon. If he heard of one, though it were in the wilderness, he would help beat a path to its door.

A dirty child looked at a flower and then went to wash and put on clean clothes. She needed only an example. People, failing people with soiled lives, fumbling people, misguided people, see someone living a good life, a life on the quality level, and begin to try to do likewise. They may mention it to no one, but if you are living a life that is an inspiration to them you will begin living in them from that day on. That is quite a responsibility, it is true; but a quality life can take responsibility because it can meet the test.

The man who makes a better mousetrap does so by trying to eliminate the faults and weaknesses of present mousetraps and also to make improvements on anything yet produced in the mousetrap line. But when his work is done one can see that it is better materials plus better workmanship and maybe plus a new and better idea. A better book is written, a better sermon preached, or a better life lived the same way. These are the three things to use in compounding quality, the apex

of which is perfection.

A piece of cloth with shoddy in it is not perfect. A piece of cloth that is good at the beginning and skimpy at the last is not perfect. A piece of cloth that is better on one side than the other is not perfect. A piece of cloth that looks better in display than in use is not perfect. It is much the same with a life.

4. PERFECTION IS PROGRESSIVE

Do you not see by now that perfection is not something far up in the air above you, but something lying at your fingertips, that it is not something you can never hope even to finish with but that it is something you can begin with now? Loosen up your idea of what perfection is. Let it still be perfection, but get it within the realm of possibility and experience. What would be the use of having the word in the language if it did not mean anything? Why would Jesus ever have set it as a standard if no one could hope to reach it?

Of course perfection has constant challenge in it, because it grows with you. It is always large enough to move in, high enough to make us stretch a little, and fast-moving enough to keep us advancing. As quickly as you catch up with it it moves on, not to get away from you but to keep you in pursuit. The result is not frustration but progress. The process of striving for perfection is the most stimulating and challenging thing we can do.

Take the artist, or the worker, or the saint, or anyone who has reached a very high point of development. How you envy him, and wonder by what magic process he ever attained the position he occupies, that of seeming perfection. Was it by luck, or accident, or what? And what is the chance of such advancement being put within the reach of an average person like yourself?

Let us get right down to earth and do a little practical thinking on the question. The secret of what this person has done and become is neither luck nor accident. It is that he began far back down the road with what was perfection for him then, and as his perfection grew he grew with it, until perfection for him today is something that would once have looked as inaccessible to him as it does to you today.

Of course he had to start with a special ability, but everyone has a special ability of one kind or another. Yours may not be the same as his, but you have one, which you should discover and use as he has done. Starting with that talent, he has simply kept doing his best with it until today his best is a wonderful best. So stop thinking of perfection as something made of unyielding granite or unbendable cast iron, and think of it as the elastic and adaptable thing it is, something to which you can fit yourself and with which you can grow as far and as long as you will keep in reach of it.

It would change not only most of our lives but the whole world with them if

more of us would learn what perfection is and act accordingly. So meditate on that Latin prefix per. It means "through", and with that meaning appears in our language just as it did in that of the Romans. Then the verb facere, to use the infinitive form of the verb facio, means "to make". Just put the two ideas together, and you will see that per means "through" and fecit means "made". The idea is not one of something out of reach but of something that is genuine through and through. One doing his best is living a life that may be so described, but always remember that unless one's best keeps getting better it is not really his best; so perfection is something that begins where we are, but its reach is infinite. There is your basis for perfection.

5. HOW?

We are speaking freely of quality living and perfection here. We have even mentioned attaining such a standard. How does one actually go about it? The question cannot be fully answered here, but we will set forth a few hints.

Keep your goal clearly before you. One can move in a direct line only when he keeps his eye fixed on the point at which he is aiming.

Live and work sincerely and honestly. Speak and live the truth. Deal honorably with all, so that no revelation can embarrass you.

Do good wherever you have the opportunity. If a kindness is shown you pass it on. Make a chain reaction of it. Let it be a boat of blessing set adrift on the waves. It will travel farther than you know.

If a kindness is not shown you, do one for someone else anyway. You will get all the greater benefit from it. Besides, if you do kindnesses to others, they will soon be doing them to you.

Keep your aspirations for the future always higher than your performance has been in the past. Choose a private star to think of when you work, and let it always lure you toward the heights. Let your hopes be high enough that you have to stand on tiptoe to reach them. It will add to your stature. No one grows from just doing the things he knows he can do.

Make everything you do your best. Always be studying, planning, and practicing to improve on what you did yesterday. Let nothing in any task or effort be less than the best you can do. This alone is perfection.

Recognize and accept responsibility. Mere existence places us in obligation. Mentally sign your name to a promissory note that you will pay the service of one good, well-lived life to your generation, to the world, and to the future. Plan to make it a service of such a quality that it is priceless. Then let nothing tempt you to fail to keep that vow.

Make peace wherever you find confusion and discord. Leave happiness wherever you find trouble. Plant courage wherever you find despair. These are things any one can do. If you do not now have a right attitude, doing them will help you to

develop one. You will be doing as much for yourself as you will for others. Respect others enough to treat them with honor and regard whether they deserve it or not. Respect yourself enough to do nothing that will be a reproach to your selfhood. When you find yourself automatically doing these things you will be well on your way to that wonderful state of being -- that of Perfection.

Seek expertness in things you already know how to do and add others to the list according to your talents and opportunities. Extend your world by widening its horizons as you move out into new fields.

Keep your motives good by always shaping your acts from good purposes. On this basis, keep analyzing yourself and measuring your growth.

6. DAY BY DAY.

If you think your life is on the humdrum order, do not assume that all this does not apply to you. Most people think their lives are humdrum, mostly because they have to be lived in the same environment and in terms of the same motions all the time. Even the people who have unusual experiences now and then may not realize it. In any case, the great experiences do not come every day but only now and then. For almost anyone life is merely a day by day business, just as you think yours is; but please be assured that most important issues are bound up in that seeming monotony. It is a matter that really has nothing to do with quality living, for a perfect piece of weaving requires the best material and effort in the whole bolt of cloth, no matter what the occasion or whether one feels bored with it or not.

If quality living were to be attempted only on the great days, the special hours, the outstanding occasions, the result would be very spotty and it would not be quality living at all. Anyone can march like a hero in a big parade, but quality living is being one in the long pull of day by day living, even in what seem to be the smallest matters, and whether anyone sees or not.

It is in the ordinary give and take of common experience that the test comes, and the test is how we manage at the most prosaic point. Can you mow a lawn or thread a needle as conscientiously as you would direct the affairs of a great organization? Just like a piece of cloth, a life, or a day is perfect only if every stitch is right. The compulsion should not be in the prominence of the task, but in the task itself.

Waiting for some special occasion to live at a high level is a good way to let your life drift by without arriving anywhere. Make the most of NOW, and the future will be easier to manage. Be careful how you pass through the valleys, and the hilltops will take care of themselves. Take pains with the little things, and you will find it more natural to take pains with the big ones. The measure is not how well you can do when the banners are flying, but how much of the spirit of triumph you can put into the drab occasion when no hands are clapping and no eye beholds.

You say everyday living is a grind? Well, so is any kind of living. Living is something that has to be done for its own sake, and quality is something that must be maintained even when the only immediate reward is the realization that you

have done your best. But that is a rewarding feeling indeed, and one of the surest guarantees of courage and confidence one can have.

So make your program not for the high spots, but for the whole length of the road, not for the great days but to make every day a great day, not for the unusual occasions but for those that would otherwise be unimportant and obscure. WEAVE THE CLOTH OF LIFE THE SAME ALL THE WAY THROUGH.

7. THERE WAS A MAN

We have shown what quality living is, and indicated that the only hope the average person has of attaining it is to see someone who is an example of how it is done. We need to be demonstrations of it, but first we need to see a demonstration of it ourselves.

There was a Man who gave this demonstration to us, and thus provided us with a working model. His was the wonderful life it was in order to be such an example. Living by such a standard enabled Him to have command over nature, over life, over Himself.

This was not merely to excite our wonder, or even our admiration. It was for us to emulate, to reflect; not merely to admire, but to do. We revere Him, for He deserves it; but the thing of practical importance is that we grasp His approach to the tasks and problems of everyday living and adopt that approach in our own lives. He is our rightness only in the sense that His life shows us how to have a rightness of our own. Nothing happens if we do nothing about it. We are speaking, of course, of Jesus of Nazareth.

- ★ He began by relating His life and all its interests to the will of the Father. God was the starting point of all His thinking and doing.
- ★ He did not hesitate to be different. That is necessary to quality living. Excellence requires living, thinking, and talking above the level of the commonplace. Most people fail of perfection because they do not have the courage to be different.
- ★ He made His life a blessing to all by radiating the blessed life. Healing, helping, encouraging, He went about doing good. GOOD IS EVIL'S ONLY ANTIDOTE.
- ★ He kept His life geared to the Eternal. That kept it above the fitful, wavering ways and false values of time and made it more constant than the stars.
- ★ He lived a life of perfect love. He was a defender of the weak, the misguided, the troubled, and the helpless. He was against only those who exploited human beings and hurt them.
- ★ He kept regular hours of meditation and prayer, so He did not lose His perspective when things were confusing and hard.

- ★ He kept the material values secondary and the spiritual values supreme, gave humanity the place of highest importance, and emphasized the eternal values.
- ★ He early developed deep and strong convictions. He held to them and lived by them regardless of what happened.
- ★ He lived a saving life. He was a Saviour of lost people, things, and values. He was a seeker of what had gone astray. He was a redeemer of what had been broken and marred.

These are a few of the features of perfection as reflected in His life. Do not debate about them. Live them. Study His life and add to the list, remembering that each quality you find is a part of a pattern - for you.



As we come to the end of another lecture lesson, rich in its gifts to you and your selfhood - that you may be able to apply each good thing to your daily living is our sincere prayer for you. Let us repeat the following prayer together:

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to find for my life the qualities of Jesus. Amen.

Bless You,

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR.

Your next lecture lesson will be THE FORWARD FORMULA and covers the following subjects:

ON STALEMATES
ASK
SEEK
KNOCK

DYNAMIC LIVING
A NEW START
THE VICTORY VIEWPOINT
PRAYER

